

NCAA Injury Surveillance System - Methods

SAMPLING

Participation in the NCAA Injury Surveillance System is voluntary and limited to member institutions. The NCAA ISS participants are selected from the population of schools sponsoring a given sport. Selections are random within the constraints of having a minimum 10 percent representation of NCAA Divisions I, II and III. This sampling scheme assures a true cross-section of NCAA institutions, which can be used to express injury rates representative of the total population of NCAA institutions sponsoring a particular sport.

It is important to emphasize that this system does not identify EVERY injury that occurs at NCAA institutions in a particular sport. Rather, it collects a sampling that is representative of a cross-section of NCAA institutions.

DATA REPORTING

Injury and exposure data are recorded by certified and student athletics trainers from participating institutions. Information is collected from the first official day of preseason practice to the final tournament contest.

INJURIES

A reportable injury in the NCAA Injury Surveillance System is defined as one that:

1. Occurs as a result of participation in an organized intercollegiate practice or contest.
2. Requires medical attention by a team athletics trainers or physician.
3. Results in restriction of the student-athlete's participation for one or more days beyond the day of injury.

A separate report is submitted for each injury. Each injury is described in detail including type of injury, body part injured, severity of injury, field type, field condition and special equipment worn.

EXPOSURES

To establish an injury rate, data are expressed as the number of injuries per unit of participation or risk.

An athlete exposure (A-E), the unit of risk in the NCAA ISS, is defined as one athlete participating in one practice or game where he or she is exposed to the possibility of athletic injury.

INJURY RATE

An injury rate is simply a ratio of the number of injuries in a particular category to the number of athlete exposures in that category. In the NCAA ISS, this value is expressed as injuries per 1,000 athlete exposures. For example, six reportable injuries during 563 athlete exposures result in an injury rate of $(6/563) \times 1,000$ or 10.7 injuries/1,000 athlete exposures.

In the above example, one would anticipate 10.7 injuries if one athlete participated in 1,000 practice and/or games, if 50 athletics participated in 20 practices and/or games, or if 100 athletes participated in 10 practices and/or games.

Injury rates can be a valuable tool in data analysis, especially when the number of exposures associated with the injury categories is not similar. For example, consider a study reporting 100 injuries on artificial turf and 200 injuries on natural turf. If the numbers of exposures is similar to the possibility of injury, then one might conclude that the chances of being injured on natural turf are greater than being injured on artificial turf.

However, if the 100 artificial turf injuries were associated with 50,000 exposures and the 200 natural turf injuries were

associated with 100,000 exposures, then the injury rates for artificial ($100/50,000 = 2$ injuries/1,000 A-E) turf are identical.

Therefore, injury rates, rather than absolute number of injuries, may be a more valuable expression of injury tendencies.

RESULTS

The following tables and figures are a summary of NCAA ISS information collected. It should be noted that these data represent selected information; a complete printout of injury data for each of the 16 sports monitored is available at the NCAA national office. The first section focuses on a specific sport; the next section compares selected information of the specific sport with 15 other sports monitored in the ISS. Additional topic areas will be added to this report annually.

The injury data presented in this report are descriptive in nature; no statistical analysis of these data has been performed. The amount of significance associated with differences in injury rates must be determined by the reader. **Emphasis in these tables should be placed on the yearly trends rather than on absolute numerical values.**

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